

## EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Little observation is required to show the enormous appetite of the American people for patent medicines. When in doubt take a drug, seems a common maxim. If you do not see a sufficiently advertised or gaudily wrapped package, ask the druggist and seldom will he fail to provide an attractive carton containing the very thing which is best for your ailment. Too often the physician must bear the onus of invariably prescribing drugs, solely because the patient demands drugs and will not be cured without them. Too often the advertising matter around the package has a greater curative influence than the contents. The old rhyme has no small portion of truth when it says,

"It will cure the dreaded consumption, and a thousand other ills,  
Smell of the cork or look at the wrapper, do you more good than Beecham's pills."

Yet here is the gist of the matter. In the face of this over-weening appetite for drugs and for patent medicines, why should not the food administration, or some other allied administration, advocate and enforce an economy in patent medicines and nostrums? Why not save the money that, in the form of nostrums and secret cure-alls, goes into that human garbage pail, the stomach? Why not have a campaign by the drug-store, educating the people to economize in this regard, just as they are being taught to do at the table? Why should the patent medicine vendors and manufacturers continue to reap their unholy profits in war-time, when every dollar is needed in the Liberty loan? Finally, why not a national campaign of real economy and health conservation, by doing without patent medicines and nostrums?

It is a source of pride for every physician in the State to read the following in the September bulletin of the State Board of Health. "California is the first State to face the venereal disease problem squarely, and to establish a bureau to handle it directly and vigorously." The tentative program was published in the last issue of the JOURNAL. No other single disease factor has been more important in the English and French armies than venereal disease. This alone makes it imperative that the American army be saved from such disaster. Also the retro-active effect on the civilian population, both during and following the war, is of no small importance. Uncompromising repression of prostitution is the best measure so far tested for prevention and gradual elimination of venereal disease. That such repression has not been an accomplished fact in any previous army is no argument against it, but rather a cogent reason for giving this method which has such rich promise, a thorough trial. There is no valid support of other methods to be drawn from experience of them in controlling venereal disease. But along with uncompromising repression, must go provision of adequate entertainment and recreation for soldiers and sailors. This provision is being

undertaken on a broad scale by the policy of co-operation with the Knights of Columbus, the Y. M. C. A. and other agencies. The State Board of Health should receive the heartiest congratulation and support from the medical profession in its splendid campaign, in conjunction with the military authorities, to decrease venereal disease in the army.

The JOURNAL receives a constant supply of anonymous literature dealing with all manner of affairs. Among the more recent accessions of the editorial waste-basket have been a great bulk of circulars, reprints and special articles opposing prohibition. Strangely enough, on none of this material is there any clue as to the source of its dissemination. Not that we care where it may originate! Not at all! It illustrates too perfectly the losing fight of various liquor interests. Only it would be surprisingly unique to have some of this gratuitous furnace feed signed and to know that its instigators were not really as afraid of publicity as they seem to be. The instigators and authors of anonymous literature of any sort have usually a cogent reason for keeping in the dark. In this case, the reason is not far to seek. Of all men, the medical profession, through its liberal education and humanizing activity, is least susceptible to anonymous contributions. The opponent who fears to fight in the open has indeed little hope of success.

Once again will the physicians of California please look upon the leading city newspapers of California and see how they reek with the advertisement of quack, specialist, secret remedy and sure-cure. Without advertising media, Quack Chamley of Los Angeles, who receives attention in another column, could not keep up his cruel deception. With a clean press, a large percentage of the shameless abortionists and mongers of fake remedies would be bankrupt. Too often is there a striking contrast between the editorial page of the newspaper and the advertising department. There is no valid reason from the standpoint of decent citizenship, a clean news press, and an educated public sentiment, why the newspapers of California should not set a high standard of advertisement as well as of news.

Particular attention is called to a letter, published under the "Correspondence" Department in this issue, to Dr. Louise B. Deal, of San Francisco, from Dr. Flora Murray, Doctor in Charge, Military Hospital, Endell St., W. C. 2, London, England.

The women physicians in the United States are entitled to exactly the same recognition for military service as are men doing the same work and assuming the same responsibilities. Moreover, women physicians ought to be represented in the military medical service wherever their professional services can be used. It is to be greatly hoped that in the near future methods will be worked out whereby this can be brought about.